

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.]

Vol. IX.—No. 36.]

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1889.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—VI.

ON "THE CREDENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL."

To the Rev. Professor Joseph Agar Beet.

SIR,—I purpose to criticise your Fernley Lecture delivered at Sheffield on the fifth of August, entitled "The Credentials of the Gospel: a Statement of the Reason of the Christian Hope." I understand the Lecture is to be amplified into a volume, and supported with an army of references. But, as it stands, it contains the whole of your argument, and a concise statement is preferable to a diffuse one as a basis of discussion. It affords less opportunity for deviating into side-issues, or getting lost in a crowd of authorities.

Your lecture purports "to test the firm and broad foundation on which rests the Christian hope." It is characteristic of the present state of religious controversy that you say nothing as to the Christian fear. The doctrine of Hell is gradually disappearing. Heaven is promised to believers, and in the words of Hamlet "the rest is silence." I have no doubt that this compromise will be serviceable for some time. But it cannot be permanent. Heaven and Hell are logical correlatives. They are like the Siamese twins. Destroy the one, and the other may linger for awhile, but its doom is sealed. Hope and fear move forward together. They are inseparably linked, and both are extinguished by knowledge. Where we are certain, we do not conjecture; but where there is incertitude, the imagination will play in all directions.

"Our investigation," you premise, "shall be on methods scientific and philosophical." I do not consider you have kept your promise. It is not scientific to reiterate dogmas; it is not philosophic to ignore replies, as the hunted ostrich ignores its pursuers. You do not "test" the foundation of your faith. You merely give a ground-plan of the building.

You affirm that "the foundation and root and source of all religion" is "the inborn moral sense." The metaphor is mixed, and the assertion is false. Nothing is more certain than that religion and morality are of separate origin and have no necessary connexion. Such connexion as they have is formed gradually. It is conspicuous in high civilisations, but almost imperceptible in the lowest stages of culture. "Many religions of the lower races," as Tylor says, "have little to do with moral conduct." The gods of an American or African Savage "may require him to do his duty towards them," but "it does not follow that they should concern themselves with his doing his duty to his neighbor." A robber, a brute, or even a murderer is not necessarily hateful to the gods, in fact such a man is often a great medicine-man or priest. Among the lower moral strata of our European population, two classes noted for piety are brigands and prostitutes. Religion, as the practical recognition of invisible powers, is most prevalent among savages and barbarians. In this sense modern Europe is less religious than mediæval Europe, and the countries which are most saturated

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with religion are the most ignorant and degraded. The more progress men make in mental and moral culture the less does religion overshadow their lives. Ethical science emerges as religious influence declines, and in the words of Lecky "the formation of a moral philosophy is usually the first step in the decadence of religions."

The association of religion with morality is, indeed, an inevitable concession of the dogmatic to the useful. While self-preservation is the first law of nature, everything must yield to the necessities of personal and social life. Natural selection weeds out the most superstitious in the struggle for existence. The main current of religion must accommodate itself to the average conditions of contemporary civilisation. Apparently it is religion that dictates, but in reality it obeys, just as the laws in a constitutional monarchy are enacted by Parliament though executed in the name of the Crown. Religion conforms to what it cannot avert, and finally, after a long succession of changes, it descends to the position of a servant of its old subject, whose interests it pretends to safeguard, just as the monarchy ends by posing as the bulwark of the people's liberties. By this time it has lost its once imperial tones, it speaks in apologetic accents, and instead of commanding earth in the name of heaven, it proffers itself as an occult assistant of secular interests. When we are told that religion is a powerful aid to morality, we are also reminded that morality occupies the seat of sovereignty.

With regard to our "inborn moral sense," I admit its reality, as I admit the reality of our musical sense or our mathematical sense. But I deny its being "inborn" except as *inherited*. It is a product of evolution, like all the rest of our faculties, and it has all degrees of development, from the incipency of the congenital criminal to the relative perfection of the true philanthropist.

I am occupying no novel position. Giants of thought, such as Darwin and Spencer, to say nothing of older writers, have laboriously constructed it, and I do no more than take advantage of their labors. While the books of such men are in the hands of educated readers, it is idle, nay ludicrous, to go on asserting the old doctrines as though they were unchallenged. It is undignified, no less than futile, to sit upon the shore and ignore the flowing tide. Mrs. Partington herself, sweeping back the Atlantic with her broom, was less absurd; for her exertions were heroic, and she kept on the safe side of the waves without beating a sudden and ignominious retreat.

You begin the real argument of your lecture by appealing to our "moral judgments," which "differ in kind and differ infinitely from all others." You assert that this difference "is revealed by the different emotions worked in us by a great calamity and a great crime."

This is very vague language. What is it that makes us regard calamities and crimes differently? Is it not a question of agency? We feel no resentment against a flood or a fire. Why? Because the y

are insensitive, and unamenable to motives. Men, on the other hand, *are* amenable to motives, and their wrong-doing excites resentment; first, in those they directly injure; and, secondly, in society at large. I do not mean that the feeling is a simple one. It includes hatred—which is only an intense form of dislike—fear, wounded self-love, a sense of disturbance, and, in many cases, though not in all, an imaginative perception of danger to the community.

So much for the *feeling*. The *judgment* is entirely different. It is purely intellectual. Some cases are perfectly obvious. The “extreme cases” you refer to are as easy of decision as whether water is good to drink or bread to eat. But the vaster multitude of intermediate cases call for great exercise of the mental powers. This is the reason why many persons of excellent dispositions are so often perverse in their moral judgments. Even *your* moral judgment is defective, or you would not instance as “a villain of very deep dye” a man who has “deliberately, and without provocation, killed his mother.” I should say that a man who murders his mother, *without provocation*, is not a villain, but a lunatic.

“These confident judgments,” you say, “imply an infallible standard of comparison.” What is an infallible standard? I do not understand the adjective. A standard is simply a standard. It may be *applied* with all degrees of efficiency. A foot-rule is a foot-rule. One man uses it well, and another ill; one will take the dimensions of a room with reasonable accuracy, and another make exasperating blunders. The “infallibility” must be in the *application* of the standard.

Your confusion on this subject is such that I feel no surprise at your silence as to the standard itself. You do not say what it is. You call it infallible, but that is no information. You speak of “an eternal law of right,” and of the “voice” within us. But the voice is, in my opinion, only the echo of our own sentiments; while the “eternal law of right” may mean anything or nothing until it is explained. Words like *eternal* and *infallible* do not enlighten me. I want to know *what is* your “law of right.” That is an indispensable preliminary.

When you tell me that the moral judgment is “universal,” I must deny the proposition if it means that “all men everywhere know that treachery, lying, theft, adultery, and murder are condemned by a law which speaks with an unerring voice of indisputable authority.” The Hindu Thug deems it right to murder, and the Thugs of your Church, in former ages, thought it a pious duty to slay heretics and infidels. Adultery among women is held to be wrong in most countries, but millions of savages would laugh at you if you told them that adultery among men was either a crime or a vice. Theft and treachery are wrong within the tribe or association, but frequently a virtue if practised on outsiders. Lying is only a vice within the same limits. These statements are indisputable, and I understand why you shun such witnesses as “modern travellers or missionaries.” The breath of a single one of them would shatter the very basis of your argument.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

There is said to be a serious conflict between the French and American Freemasons, resulting in the suspension of all relations between the lodges of the two countries. This matter has been going on ever since the Grand Orient of France dispensed with L.G.A.D.L.U., that is Le Grand Arch. recte de l'Univers. Now when invited to attend a Convention of Freemasons to be held in Paris, the Americans have refused. Possibly the difficulty will be got over by the invitations being issued by those who follow the Scottish Rite which retains the L.G.A.D.L.U. This rite was dominant under the Empire but has fallen quite into the background under the Republic.

REVIVALS OF SUPERSTITION.

Love of the marvellous and fear of the supernatural lie so deep in the blood that they may be said to be innate. Our savage ancestors were necessarily superstitious. The belief in spirits, magic, and witchcraft arose from their very dreams. It was ministered to by every aspect of nature which they could not understand, and could only refer to some power similar to that which they were conscious of themselves exercising. Education, the slow training of the race, has had a large influence in softening down instinctive superstition, but from time to time, especially in infancy, it reasserts itself, and often makes an impression lasting the whole life. Sometimes even in the strong-minded and cultured it is found to be far from extinct. It reappears as vigorous as ever after some malady, or even some moral struggle, at what is called the change of life, or it may be upon the breakdown of the brain from overwork or at the approach of death.

Lunacy is mainly atavism, and the lunatic in his theories of existence but reverts to the animism and fetishism of his savage ancestors. The singing and shouting of the modern Salvationist are but survivals of savage exorcisms to ward off the influence of evil spirits. It is upon the inherited fund of superstition that charlatans everywhere play, and the great citadel of superstition is the belief in spirits. God, the great spirit, is but a big ghost,* and the devil a big bogey,

Around the belief in spirits and fear of the dead have grown up all the religions, and even as these decay this primal element remains and takes new forms. Spiritism may claim to be a world religion, yet spiritists are all at loggerheads as to the nature or condition of spirits. Is there a heaven or a hell, and what are they like? Do spirits retain their sex, and are they re-incarnated? To such questions the most discordant answers are given. All the religions differ; and the modern spiritists are no more agreed. Swedenborg has one theory, “Allan Kardec” (M. Rivail) another, A. J. Davis another, Emma Hardinge Britten another, and Madame Blavatsky another. Yet all find their supporters, none of whom are willing to confess their ignorance. Humbugs live in clover upon this root superstition, never pausing in the midst of their prosperity to consider the many poor infatuated gulls who, believing in their delusions, have become lunatics or semi-imbecile self-tormentors. The exposure of the Davenport, Home, Monck and Slade, the catching of so many mediums while impersonating spirits, even the confessions of the Fox sisters, who set the modern spiritist business going, does not deter others from trying the same old game, and thriving upon it. It is the dupes make the deceivers, and there must be truth in Butler's saying that

Doubtless the pleasure is as great
In being cheated as to cheat.

There are tens of thousands in this wealthy England whose chief pursuit is amusement. They tire of seeing and hearing the same things day after day. They will give much for a fresh sensation, some new excitement, some novelty in thought or religion. It matters not how absurd, the craze is sure of recognition, and votaries, especially among ladies of the idle classes. One season it is table-rapping, another mesmerism, another planchette, another sympneumata, another palmistry, another theosophy. One superstition flies but to be succeeded, and the foolish world wonders over the most ridiculous deceptions, and is prepared to take them as heaven-born and supernatural revelations. Among a certain order of people there is change of conviction without progress. Dr. Gilles de la Tourette, an eminent pupil of Dr.

* The Mahimmas of the Theosophists are but “Great Spirits,” as the word implies.

Charcot, in his standard work on Hypnotism, laments that those who formerly prayed to Saint Anthony, of Padua, for the recovery of lost articles, now consult what is called a lucid somnambulist or clairvoyant. There is no progress, he says, for the lost articles are no more found in the one case than in the other, and one pays more for a consultation than for candles.

The great fad at present is "Occult Science." Its historical place has been admirably summarised by Dr. E. B. Tylor.

"It belongs in its main principle to the lowest known stages of civilisation, and the lower races, who have not partaken largely of the education of the world, still maintain it in vigor. From this level it may be traced upward, much of the savage art holding its place substantially unchanged, and many new practices being in course of time developed, while both the older and newer developments have lasted on more or less among modern cultured nations. But during the ages in which progressive races have been learning to submit their opinions to closer and closer experiment at last, occult science has been breaking down into the condition of a survival, in which state we mostly find it among ourselves."—(*Primitive Culture*, chap. iv. vol. 1, p. 101.)

There are two things feared by practisers of occult science, whether it takes the form of astrology, alchemy, spiritism, hypnotism, or theosophy—Ridicule and the Police. These are always found to spoil the phenomena. The conditions are rarely favorable for sceptics; and, if the sceptics are witty, the case is hopeless.

From the days of Mesmer and Cagliostro, and long before (for Madame Blavatsky is partly right in saying that what she calls magic and magnetism was known to the ancients), what theosophists call "the psychical powers latent in man" has been a favorite field of operations for the charlatan. The oracle at Delphi was the outcome of an hysterical *convulsionnaire*. Baalam fell prostrate with his eyes open while prophesying, Saul stripped off his clothes when he prophesied, and Isaiah walked naked for three years. Disease has been taken for the certain proof of divinity. It is noticeable that most religious founders have been abnormally afflicted. Jesus was said to have had a devil, and his own friends wished to put him under restraint, and Mohammed was subject to epilepsy. Hysteria and insanity have constantly been confounded with inspiration, as hypnotism is now-a-days being regarded as "astral force."

Into the question of hypnotism and somnambulism, which are but two similar classes of disorder, I shall not here enter. Suffice it to say, I am neither of those who admit all or deny all its alleged phenomena. But I distinctly regard the attitude of scepticism as superior to that of credulity. No harm is done by denying. Whatever is real can be proved. Doubt alters no fact. It serves truth by forcing its demonstration to be placed on the strongest grounds. Credulity serves to support the charlatans, who live on "occultism." It engenders fear. It has been my lot to know more than one person in constant dread of being unconsciously "magnetised." To investigate searchingly into curious mental phenomena is a task beyond the many, but it is very easy to arouse the credulity which slumbers but lightly in most of us. Accounts of scientific experiments as told, for instance, in Dr. Charcot's *Archives de Neurologie* are very different from the same stories embellished by the imagination and rhetoric of theosophic advocates. Let me not be misunderstood. I am not pleading against examination, but that it shall be made by competent persons under conditions likely to afford useful results. And the work is being done. Not one, but many eminent continental physicians have taken up the subject. The ground is being cleared and the theosophic rubbish built on it cleared away. The theory of animal magnetism has been shattered, but it is still useful to remind experimenters, in the words of Du

Potet, the great advocate of that theory, that "magnetism in unskilful hands may produce irreparable disorders."† Mystery has its fascination, but it has its dangers. It is from the depths of a painful experience I venture a note of warning to those who may be attracted, either by occultism or Olcottism. Those who venture on the theosophic path may find themselves, instead of resting on the solid ground of fact, struggling amid the quicksands of chaotic creeds. Theosophy is like the Apocalypse. It usually finds its students cracked, or leaves them so.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

From a paragraph in the *Caithness Courier* we observe that Judge North has been engaged in a "mill" at Strathspey, where his lordship is enjoying a hook-and-line holiday. Two laborers had the audacity to approach the river near Arndilly House, and were peremptorily ordered to remove their vile clay from the sacred spot. On their refusal to move, his lordship took off his coat and "went" for them. His superior station cowed their spirits and prevented them from striking back, otherwise the noble judge would have had a bad taste of *their* muscular Christianity. As it was they lodged a complaint at the police station.

By the way, if Judge North is "spoiling for a fight," we shall be happy to oblige him. We haven't used the gloves since our salad days, but most likely we should recover the use of our "mauleys" with such an antagonist. Our only stipulation would be that his lordship shouldn't send for the police if he felt sick.

Judge North sent us to gaol for bringing the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt. We dare say we deserved twelve months, but it seems to us that Judge North deserves seven years. Those who bring the Bible and Christianity into the greatest disbelief and contempt are the men who cant about both and fly in the face of their plainest teachings. We remember with what unction Judge North spoke of "Our Lord." Well now, Our Lord said "resist not evil" and "if one smite thee on the one cheek turn unto him the other also." Yet here is the pious Judge pulling off his coat and actually beginning a fight. He doesn't even wait for the first blow.

What the two laborers might have said to Judge North—"Thank you, my lord, the licking is worthy of your creed."

Old Jehovah had a bad fit on Monday night. The coruscations of his anger were remarkably fine. But unfortunately he did a great deal of damage, although he roared somewhat feebly; another proof of the saying that a silent dog is the worst biter. Several places were struck by lightning. At Brentwood the fire brigade had to quench the flames. Many parts also were flooded, and the crops suffered heavily.

Floods and thunderstorms may be expected to prevail at this season. Many of the parsons are off for their holidays, and it is rumored that God has gone with them.

The floods in Japan have destroyed some ten thousand lives, and left twenty thousand homeless and in great suffering. When the Lord doesn't attend to the Christians in America, how can he be expected to look after the Japs?

John Jamieson Summerside is (or was) superintendent of the Methodist New Connexion Sunday School at Windy Nook, near Newcastle. In this capacity he helped to prepare the children for their approaching anniversary, and he is alleged to have shown too much attention to the girls. At any rate, he is committed for trial on a charge of indecently assaulting three of them. The line of defence

† Any who doubt this should read the evidence in *L'Hypnotisme et les Etats Analogues au point de vue medico-legal*, by Dr. Gilles de la Tourette. Paris 1887.

seems to be that it was not an indecent assault, as the girls were consenting parties.

Thomas Miller, captain of the Church Army at Maldon, Essex, a married man with three children, took away a girl of fifteen with him to Leith, alleging to her parents that he had got her a situation. He is evidently a close student of the means of gaining favor with the Lord.

A man of God, and one apparently after his own heart, is the Rev. John Justin Dreaper, curate of Ullerton, near Selby. He is fifty six years of age, and has been thirty years in the ministry. Convicted of an indecent assault upon a girl of fourteen while travelling in a railway carriage with her between York and Selby, he has been sentenced to one month's imprisonment. We wonder if it was his first offence. At any rate its punishment is not adequate to give assurance that it will be his last.

A letter from Professor Godwin, printed in the *British Weekly*, suggests that it is undesirable to give the Old Testament to savages. The example of God's polygamous favorites, and such texts as "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," are not very elevating. But savages—cannibals for instance—may easily be led astray by reading in the New Testament, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Semper Eadem. The Catholic Church in Brazil is fighting tooth and nail against a Bill to allow liberty to other sects.

Spurgeon has completed twenty volumes of his *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. No doubt they have been a financial success, but judging by the specimens we have seen we should not care for the task of wading through them, though we hear they are much esteemed and even used by some clergymen whose congregations would never think of reading anything written by a Dissenter.

When we were young, Dr. Cumming, the prophet who was always discoursing on the near approach of the Millennium, and took a long lease of his property was one of the most popular preachers of London. He too issued some twenty volumes which sold like wildfire. We sometimes come across them on bookstalls at 2d. and 3d. a time, yet finding no purchasers.

Spurgeon cannot "bring his soul" to a banquet. How strange! He is always telling people to imitate their Savior, who was a rare hand at these entertainments, even performing the wine trick when the liquor was running short.

"Last week," says Spurgeon, "I had tea at the Archbishop's, and luncheon with the Bishop of Rochester." This hobnobbing of a typical Dissenter with Church dignitaries is a sign of the times. The army of faith is drawing its ranks together to fight the common enemy.

The little nest of Liverpool Mohammedans who welcomed the Shah when he visited that city are bent on proselytising among the people of England. Their leader, Mr. W. H. Quilliam, a solicitor, has already published a sixpenny pamphlet calling upon Englishmen to "fling aside prejudices" and "embrace Islam." It is an immense joke. The Christian missionaries are abroad (very much abroad) converting the heathen, and here are the heathen trying to convert the Christians. Meanwhile the Freethinker looks on with amusement. While the religionists are aping the Kilkenny cats he will never want food for laughter.

Six persons in Victoria set down their religion in the census paper as "£ s. d." There are six honest men in Victoria anyhow.

"£ s. d." is the practical religion of most Christians. They go to church on Sunday and whine "Blessed be ye poor," and spend all the rest of the week in scraping up money.

£ s. d., £ s. d.,
Ever-blessed Trinity;
Three in one, and one in three,
Ever-blessed £ s. d.

Evidence is always cropping up that the success of Christianity in foreign parts, as reported by missionaries cannot be implicitly depended upon. Taking up the Hon. Lewis Wingfield's *Wanderings of a Globe Trotter*, we notice that he says of the Chinese, "Many become converts for a time in order to learn English, and this advantage being gained they return to their native faith." For such facts as these we have to go to lay travellers. The missionary reports chronicle the conversions, but make no mention of the relapses.

Professor Vambéry's *causerie* about Dervishes in the *Newbery House Magazine* is very entertaining. There is, it seems, a class of dervishes who are mere Mohammedan globe-trotters, and make their way from further Asia to the ends of Europe. They are sometimes polite enough to call upon M. Vambéry, but they are oftener found in disreputable taverns, or even in prison. Alas for the rarity of holiness!—*St. James's Gazette*.

Signor Pecci don't mean to budge from Rome, but as God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and even the Virgin Mary, have done so little for him in his recent distress, he calls upon the faithful to address a special prayer during the month of October to St. Joseph. And, as if this were not enough, the poor old man is doing his best to make friends with Mary's presumed father, Joachim, having elevated the rank of the feast celebrated in his honor, and made it obligatory on the whole Catholic world. They used to plead that they prayed to Mary in order to get at the Son through his Mother. We suppose, finding that she is too much taken up with Gabriel or that pigeon, the Pope now tries to get at Mary through her poor old husband and her father.

How wonderfully Christian treatment of sceptics alters when once they make their mark in the world. Spinoza for above a hundred years was pronounced a monster of impiety. Labbé Ladvoat, author of a standard biographical dictionary, translated into English in 1801, reports: "It is asserted that Spinoza was short and yellowish, that he had a gloomy countenance, and carried the marks of reprobation in his face." Since Spinoza came into repute through the influence of Lessing and Goethe the Christians have done their best to claim him. Victor Cousin compared him to Thomas à Kempis, and the Rev. James Martineau insinuates that he was very much attracted to J. C., if not almost a Christian.

A specimen of the modes of advocacy employed against Freethinkers is sent to us enclosed in a list of lectures on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society. This tract is headed "Beware of Infidelity!!!" "Infidels," it begins, "are disguising themselves under the name of 'Secularists' the better to deceive the young and the unwary, but they are INFIDELS all the same; therefore, in warning decent persons of 'Secularism' and Secular Societies, we emphatically say, 'Beware of Infidelity.'" The Infidels, according to this truly Christian tract, teach "Sensuality, Free-love, and a foul system. . . . opening up the way for universal prostitution. . . ." "beside a good deal more which is too vile to mention." Judging from the advertisements on the other side, this amiable and Christ-like description of infidels is put forward by a person who trades upon his brother's name, that brother being one of the most notorious of "infidels."

The Spiritual Evidence Society, of Newcastle, gives a new argument against capital punishment. It appears that the spirits of executed murderers retain their love of killing, and go about suggesting diabolical crimes to evil disposed persons. Murderers should therefore be kept alive, and their wicked propensities eliminated. But we are not told how this is to be done. When Jack the Ripper is caught it would be well to hand him over to the Spiritual Evidence Society.

C. D. Graham has gone over the Niagara Falls in a barrel. Another crank, named Brodie, is preparing to swim over in a Boyton rubber suit. One fool makes many.

There is a disposition in certain people to do something outrageous, and make themselves a nine-days' wonder. In the old days these people used to tell prize lies, and fill

the world with miracles. Now the progress of science reduces them to the necessity of risking their lives. This is a decided improvement. The mischief isn't much, and you easily see the end of it.

Mr. G. W. Childs possesses a manuscript parody by Lord Byron upon the prologue to Wordsworth's "Peter Bell." Here are the first two stanzas:

There's something in a stupid ass,
And something in a heavy dunce;
But never since I went to school
I heard or saw so damned a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once.

And now I've seen so great a fool
As William Wordsworth is for once,
I really wish that Peter Bell,
And he who wrote it, were in hell,
For writing nonsense for the nonce.

The *Freeman* (Baptist organ), writing on Mohammedanism and the activity of the American Baptist missions in Turkey and Asia Minor, admits that the converts reported are made, not from Mohammedans but from the Oriental Churches. That is, one sect of Christians proselytises another sect instead of converting those who reject Christianity altogether.

The Bishop of Worcester has issued a pastoral in which he speaks of "the misleading and debasing puerilities of extreme ritual in the conduct of divine worship." Whereupon the extreme Ritualist organ the *Church Times*, calls the bishop "A Belated Survival."

The Clergy are wild at the withdrawal of the Tithe Recovery Bill, and the clerical papers are full of complaints because the Tories think more of the farming interest than of the parsons.

"Captain Moonlight" has appeared in Wales, threatening vengeance upon bailiffs and tithe collectors, who are pretty well afraid to carry on their calling.

Dr. J. R. Leebody, of Mager College, Londonderry, laments that preaching is declining in efficacy. This he attributes to the fact that the pulpit is not now placed at the same intellectual distance from the pew. In other words the pew is beginning to find out that the pulpit knows no more than itself.

A railroad is to be built from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land are protesting. The journey to Jerusalem has hitherto been performed upon donkeys, and the pious devotees argue that the new arrangement will do away with this feature so long associated with the history and traditions of Palestine, and be fatal to religious sentiment. There is a basis of reason for this plea. Abolish all the donkeys, and what would become of reverence for Palestine or the religion that started there? —*Freethought*.

The heirs of Stephen Girard, the Philadelphia Freethinker and millionaire, who left the bulk of his property in benefactions to that city, have commenced a suit, on the ground that the city authorities have not properly carried out the provisions of the will. However it may be in other respects, it is certain the trustees of the Orphan College have shamefully perverted their trust. Girard endowed the college on the understanding that no religion should be taught and no ministers even allowed to enter the grounds. The trustees have actually erected a chapel in connection with the college.

The Parson of Puddleton, county Mudford—i.e. some country parson giving himself that signature—has been spending a free Sunday in London, and describing his experiences in the *Church Times*. He visited Spurgeon's Tabernacle and the Camberwell Station. At this last place, he says, "I joined myself to the audience around a young, earnest man, whose name I learnt was Standing. He was describing the teaching of the Roman Church on Hell, and by way of enforcing his remarks showed us some cartoons copied from books published *cum permissu*." Very dreadful pictures they were, says the parson of Puddleton, who

mentions that Mr. Standing lectured with great energy of purpose, but was self-controlled in demeanor, and had but few of the tricks of oratory. "I could but sympathise (he continues) with some of his criticisms, but when he proceeded to draw the inference that all Anglican clergy were feeding their school children with similar distortions of truth, and were only seeking to guide education so as to keep the children in mental slavery, I thought of my own little ones at Puddleton, and how for generations the education given in our schools has won the ungrudging praise of the Government Inspectors."

After this the Parson of Puddleton went to the Christian Evidence platform. He says: "The arguments and illustrations were the old friends whom I had met years ago, and thought were dead and buried by this time." He then suggests that the best priests in London should "go out and meet the men on their own ground." He tells us how they should go about it: "Diligently study the mental attitude of Secularist teachers"; "never assume the position of masters," etc. We rather fancy the London clergy will shrug their shoulders at these suggestions of a rural parson. We can assure him, on the part of the London Secularists, they would be delighted. Failing the best priests of London putting in an appearance, would he himself take up the cudgels? We at any rate should listen with respect, for we fancy we recognise in the Parson of Puddleton a charming essayist and the wisest and wittiest parson left in Arcadia, Dr. Augustus Jessopp.

Sir Henry Isaacs, who is looked forward to as the next Lord Mayor of London is of the chosen race. How would he feel if he had to try a case of blasphemy.

The *British Weekly*, the organ of diluted Presbyterianism, crows that Christianity is firmer than ever. "Huxley and Tyndall don't intimidate as they did once; they have been assigned to their true place in the role of Pope, and their fulminations are rated as those that proceed from Rome." Edinburgh used to boast of being level with the culture of Europe, but the Scotch writers in the *British Weekly* are at least a quarter of a century behind the age.

There is nothing like religion for swelling people out with self conceit. Every sect, big or little, goes on the more or less open assumption that there is no salvation outside its special fold. But perhaps the Church of England, at least in our country, displays the greatest impudence in this direction. Here, for instance, is a vicar in the north of Bedfordshire solemnly notifying all Dissenters that where there is no Bishop there is no Church, that the Church is the Body of Christ, and that all who separate themselves from the Church (*his* Church) cut themselves off from the Body of Christ; that is, forfeit their tickets for heaven, and get booked through to the opposite place.

Here is another case. The Rev. J. T. Gardner, of Hungerford, writes as though matrimony were nothing but living tally unless celebrated in a State gospel-shop. The chief consideration, he says, should be "whether our chosen partner is a real Christian—that is, a faithful Churchman or Churchwoman." Evidently, in this parson's opinion, all the Christians in existence are members of the Church of England.

What a pity it is that Jesus Christ did not manage his business better. According to all the sects, even at this time of day, the real Christians are only a handful. And for this paltry result God Almighty got born in a stable, lived like a beggar, and died upon a cross! Old Nick is far more sagacious. He never went through these sad adventures, and never sacrificed his only son for next to nothing. He just spent five minutes in the Garden of Eden and made himself Prince of this World with the smallest investment of time and trouble.

Advocates of cremation should make use of the returns issued by the Home Office as to the overcrowding of the dead in London cemeteries. More than a million and a quarter have been buried, or hidden out of sight in London during the last half century, mostly in durable coffins in unsuitable soil, in vaults or already crowded graves. In the Tower Hamlets since 1841, 247,600 have been placed within seventeen acres, and as many as seventy have been

put in one pit, an accumulation far too vast for earth and air to purify and disintegrate. When will our County Council have the public spirit of the infidel Municipal Council of Paris and put up a public crematorium? Religious prejudice blocks the way even of sanitation.

The partisans of "The angelic choir" of ladies in surplices evidently disregard the full scope of the Apostle Paul's injunction "Let your women keep silence in the churches." If they may sing why not also preach and teach? They could do it far better than most of the present occupants of the pulpit.

The dodges resorted to by the impecunious churches to raise the needful excites the ire of the Rev. J. Priestly Foster, who publishes an emphatic onslaught upon "Fancy Fair Religion," which he calls "the world converting itself." All very well, especially from a minister of a highly endowed establishment. But we wonder how the Church would get along at all if it held out no hand to the world, the flesh and the devil.

"Brotherhoods" are the latest scheme of the Romanising party. They want laymen of means to pay for their own support, to join societies vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, but with no prospect of their ever being ordained as clergymen. Why don't the High Church Clergy set the example? Taken as a whole, we should say they were deeply vowed against either poverty, chastity, or obedience.

The Wesleyans have been agitated by the burning question of whether amusement is devilish? The Rev. A. Brown says it is, and the Rev. F. Ballard says it isn't. The awful question cropped up at the Conference, and some of the bigots were evidently for turning Mr. Ballard out as a rotten sheep. Such is the spirit of true religion everywhere. It simply means the sacrifice of man to God. And the joke of it is that nobody can prove that God ever asked for anything of the sort.

Why people don't come to church has been occupying the attention of the Rev. W. F. Edgerton, Baptist minister of Oldham. He admits and deplors the evil, and sensibly warns his brethren against trying to make their gospel-shops attractive by imitating the caterers for public amusement. His remedy is to go on preaching the gospel, and leave the rest with God. It is a brave proposal, but it does not appear that God is so much interested in the Christian Church as he used to be. Once upon a time he worked miracles to help it on, and after that he allowed it to use the law to compel people to turn up and listen to a sermon on Sunday. But now the law is obsolete, and the miracles cannot be had for love or money. The tide is therefore setting away from the churches and chapels, and the sky-pilots are becoming perfect Jeremiahs.

The new edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern" is being found fault with in some quarters for retaining

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

But Mr. A. W. Thomas points out that the hymn was composed by the Christian poet Cowper, and is a fair paraphrase of Zechariah xiii., 1, and Revelation vii., 14. Besides, it is included in most hymn books of different sects. We understand that decent folk are getting ashamed of the Blood of Christ business, but they should quarrel with the Bible, not with Cowper.

Perhaps the most wonderful little book in the world is possessed by Mr. French, English Consul at Constantinople. It measures an inch and a half, and contains the whole Koran written by hand. It used to be placed in the little knob below the crescent at the top of the flag-pole before going into battle. Like other holy objects, it has outlived its usefulness. Bibles are played out as safeguards in warfare. Cannon balls and bullets are no respecters of creeds.

Gods and little fishes! We always thought Thomas Paine died of cancer at his own house at New Rochelle, in

America. But it appears that we were mistaken. "T. W.," a correspondent of the *Kentish Mercury*, has discovered—God knows how—that Thomas Paine "died of small-pox in the house now 25, High-street, Woolwich." Evidently we live and learn. No doubt there is some mistake in the popular notion of the death of Jesus Christ. We shall presently hear that he died of consumption at Rome.

Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death Beds* ought to be circulated in Woolwich. When anonymous liars or fools like "T. W." are allowed to insert their trash about Thomas Paine's death-bed in the local press, it is high time that the real facts were made known to the public.

"T. W.'s" letter is made the occasion of an editorial in the *Kentish Mercury*. The editor is highly pleased with Mrs. Besant's latest evolution, and believes she will return to the bosom of the Church of England. The editorial eye is also fixed upon Mr. Bradlaugh, who is too good and brave a man to be an Atheist for ever. "If he were to embrace Christianity," says the *K. M.*, "and preach the faith he once destroyed, we might indeed look for the most happy results." Aye, indeed!

Mr. Bradlaugh, with all his powers, is only mortal. It is therefore possible that like all the rest of us, he may some day suffer from a seizure, followed by softening of the brain. Of course the odds are heavy against it—say a million to one. Nevertheless the thing is possible. There is an off chance, and the *Kentish Mercury* is counting on it.

The Rev. Z. B. Woffendale does not snap at the idea of a public debate with Mr. Foote. What he suggests is that we should take thirteen weeks to write thirteen articles in answer to thirteen questions he has drawn up. No, thank you, Mr. Woffendale! You can have a public debate—one, two, three or four nights—but we have no particular interest in promoting the limited circulation of your paper. This is all we have to say on the subject. Mr. Woffendale's adjectives pass by us like the idle wind.

The Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* gives a satirical account of Mrs. Besant's lecture in Baskerville Hall, and opines that if she had told them the Theosophic tall yarns about the "adepts," the hall "would have laughed itself empty." This does, indeed, hit a weak place in Mrs. Besant's advocacy. She is trying to make Theosophy palatable to Secularists, so she says as little as possible—at present—about the tricks of the Mahatmas. When the little pills have been swallowed, however, the big ones will be forthcoming. It wouldn't do to begin with the story of the "adept" who couldn't be shot with a rifle even at close quarters, the bullets dropping to the earth as they approached his body. Madame Blavatsky says this happened to an Eastern sheik. It is probably a missing chapter of the *Arabian Nights*.

The Theosophists say that those who do the will shall know the doctrine. This is another way of saying "we are the salt of the earth." All the Theosophists are of excellent character—including, of course, Paracelsus the drunkard, and Cagliostro, who lived on his wife's prostitution—while their opponents remain in darkness because their deeds are evil.

What a pity it is we cannot easily see which opinions are true by noting that all the good persons are of one opinion. Alas! this is not the case even among Christians. Wesley was a good man, so was Whitfield; both prayed and toiled, and each thought he had the assurance of the Holy Ghost that his own opinion was correct; yet the one remained an Arminian, and the other a Calvinist.

What cowardly liars are these professional representatives of Christ! Following the example of his European brethren, Archbishop Corrigan, of New York, has issued a pastoral letter on the Bruno celebration, in which he alleges that the great martyr's life was "most immoral." This is the old trick of the tribe. They murder men for a difference of opinion, and then excuse themselves by unscrupulous slander of their victims. Happily the reputation of Giordano Bruno is now beyond their malice. Their libels fall back upon themselves. They are squirting dirty water at the sun.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, September 8, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; at 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 3, "Is there a God?" at 7, "Mrs. Besant's Theosophy."

Sept 15 and 22, London Hall of Science; 29, Newcastle. Oct. 6 South Shields; 13 and 20, London Hall of Science; 27, Milton Hall, London.

Nov. 3, Birmingham; 10, Camberwell; 17, Hall of Science, London.

Dec. 1, Camberwell; 8, Nottingham; 15, Portsmouth 29, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. J. FERR.—We are glad to know that the pamphlet is appreciated in so many quarters.

NO ADVERTISEMENT for the *Freethinker* should be sent to any person outside our office but Mr. Forder. We cannot hold ourselves responsible for advertisements if this rule is not complied with.

T. BLOOMER.—Glad to hear you like the "Letters to the Clergy," and that you are thinking of taking four copies weekly instead of two. Thanks for the cutting.

T. BIRTLEY.—We have already explained our position. We do not make personal arrangements for debates. If any Branch of the N. S. S. wishes us to meet Mr. Rossiter we are ready to be martyred, but we are not disposed to court the infliction.

H. ROWDEN.—"The Darwinian Faith" or portions thereof has already appeared in the *Freethinker*. Thanks for cuttings.

C. K. LAPORTE.—You labor under a mistake. Mrs. Besant has not left the Secular party. All your remarks are based upon this error. As to Cardinal Newman, if you read his *Apologia* again, you will see that his change was far from sudden. The *Tracts for the Times* were written while he was in the Church of England. His journey to Rome was gradual.

DAYLIGHT.—We hope it will do the Branch some service.

J. BROWN, secretary N.E. Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—West Hartlepool Branch, £2 3s. 4d.; Stockton Branch, 9s.; Ox Hill Branch, 10s.

H. CALASCA.—Newspapers or cuttings always welcomed.

W. B.—We agree with you. There ought to be some music at the Hall of Science and other Secular halls. The correspondent of the *Kentish Mercury* is dealt with in "Acid Drops."

J. MERCER (Bristol).—Freethinkers have as much right as Christians to address open-air meetings. We are glad to hear you and the others are asserting your right, civilly but firmly.

W. G. LEYS.—You are welcome. Pleased to hear our paragraph helped Mr. Moss to an audience, and that you got rid of two dozen *Freethinkers*. Mr. Foote is engaged up to Christmas. He can hardly give a Sunday night lecture in a small hall. He has to depend on the Sunday lectures for a living.

J. NEATE hopes Freethinkers will support the open-air platform at Seven Sisters Road, South Tottenham. The Christians threaten to break it up to-day (Sept. 8).

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Northern Echo—Essex Weekly News—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Bulletin des Sommaires—Freethought—Christian Commonwealth—Open Court—Edinburgh Evening News—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Birmingham Daily Gazette—Truthseeker—Freidenker—Church Reformer—Twentieth Century—Le Danton—Wellingborough and Kettering News—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Modern Society—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Kentish Mercury—Mot d'Ordre—La Bataille—L'Egalité—L'Eclair.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

OBITUARY.—Died on August 21st, Mrs. Avenall, of consumption, at the early age of 33. All her life an ardent Freethinker, she died as she lived, true to freethought principles. She was buried at Shooter's Hill Cemetery, on the 28th. The funeral service was conducted by Mr. W. J. Ramsey.

SUGAR PLUMS.

WE are happy to state that our circulation goes on increasing. Every week is an improvement on its predecessor. There was quite a rush last week, and although we had allowed a margin for the usual rise, we had to put the formes on the machine again and print a further supply.

"SATAN" sends £1 to our Circulation Fund. He gives no address, but the letter came through the post, and the money was inside. We shall be glad to receive a similar missive from all His Majesty's imps.

ANY subscriptions to our Circulation Fund will be spent in advertising. Those friends who are able to do so—and there are many—might imitate the example of Mr. Seago, which was referred to in our last number. By getting his newsagent to take extra copies, and put one in the window, and guaranteeing to pay for the unsold copies, Mr. Seago has run up the sale in that one shop from three copies to fifteen. The same thing could be done in hundreds of places. Our circulation would soon double if newsagents could be induced to treat the *Freethinker* with common justice.

PLEASANT news from Belfast! Mr. W. M. Knox, secretary of the Ulster Branch, writes:—"I must thank you for your admirable and effective reply to 'Orange' Kane. We are getting it reprinted as a leaflet for local distribution. It is in the printer's hands at present in order to lose no time. We would like your permission for this (granted, of course). We have made four new members, so that it is already taking effect."

WE shall always be happy to deal in a similar way with the utterances of local celebrities. An article of that kind is at once of general interest and special usefulness. Our readers are invited to forward any clerical sermons on Secularism that may be reported in the press.

ALTHOUGH the weather was so remarkably fine, Mr. Foote had capital audiences on Sunday at Manchester. At this rate the Secular Hall will require stretching in the winter. There were three or four ministers at the Saturday evening lecture on Mrs. Besant's Theosophy.

THE Manchester Branch is doing fairly well, and is anxious to do still better. An open Freethinkers' Conference will be held to-day (Sep. 8) in the Hall, with two sittings, afternoon and evening, and a tea sandwiched between them. The object is to consider how best to promote Secularism in the city. Anybody who has a sensible suggestion to make will be heard gladly.

HONEST Michael Davitt is down on the Government scheme for endowing a Catholic University in Ireland. In a letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette* he calls it "a concession to the Rescript policy of Rome and the reactionary attitude of two or three members of the Irish hierarchy," and "a measure in which the mass of the people of Ireland, Catholic though they be, have but the remotest possible interest at the present time."

FREETHINKERS who propose attending the International Conference at Paris, Sep. 15th to 21st, should make their intention known to Monsieur E. Pasquier, secretary of the Paris Committee, 6 Rue de Jarente, Paris, and state of what Branch they are representatives. The Conference will, by permission of the Municipal Council of Paris, meet in the Grand Hall of the Syndical Chambers, 10 Rue de Lancry, at the corner of Place de la Republique.

OUR readers will also be delighted to hear that the Paris Municipal Council have allowed the sum of 1,500 francs towards the proceedings, and will accord the delegates a reception in the Hotel de Ville.

OWING to the elections taking place on Sunday, Sep. 22, the proceedings will terminate with a banquet on the 21st. The occurrence of the elections is somewhat unfortunate, as political feeling is sure to run pretty high, but we shall do our best to keep the Conference strictly to its business, and above all to make the organisation as effective as possible.

WE understand that several delegates will attend the Paris Conference from the provinces. Mr. Atkey and Mr. Snell will represent Nottingham. Mr. Heale of the Finsbury Branch will, we believe, also attend, and Mr. George Jacob Holyoake has expressed his intention of being present.

FUND for sending Messrs. Foote and Wheeler to the International Freethought Congress at Paris:—R. Bulman, £1; A Friend, 5s.; E. T. Finn, 5s.; G. R., 10s.; Mr. Toyne, 6s. 6d. This subscription closes next week. All who mean to subscribe should do so at once.

WE hear that Mr. Lennstrand will be unable to attend. In his absence, the Swedish Freethinkers ask Mr. Foote to represent them.

THE Italian works of Giordano Bruno have been issued in two volumes at Gottingen, and are reviewed in the *Academy* of Aug. 31.

THE Right Hon. John Morley has collected the articles of the late James Cotter Morison, contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* and other periodicals, and will edit them with an introduction upon the life and works of his friend the author.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, author of *The Light of Asia*, is making a metrical translation of the Buddhist Dhammapada, or pathway of virtue, a work which gives in the form of aphorisms the pith of Buddhist doctrines. It is being published in *The Buddhist*, a journal published at Ceylon under the editorship of the late Rev. C. Webster Leadbeater, the English clergyman who a few years back gave up Christianity to embrace Buddhism.

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet on *Secularism and Theology* has been delayed a day or two. It will, however, be on sale by the date of this paper.

THE *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* says that the Central Hall will not hold half the people who would like to hear the debate between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Gibson on the subject of "Humanity's Gain from Unbelief."

AT a largely attended meeting of the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society, convened for the purpose of considering the subject of Sunday music in the parks, a resolution was carried protesting against the resolution of the Town Council, prohibiting Sunday music in the public parks, the meeting being convinced the resolution did not represent the views of the majority of the people of Newcastle.

THE Newcastle Branch has decided to initiate an agitation against the resolution of the Town Council prohibiting Sunday music in the public parks. A committee is appointed to convene a representative meeting on the question, and a paragraph to that effect appears in the local press.

MRS SOWDEN'S tour in the Tyneside district, under the North Eastern Secular Federation, is pronounced to be a first-rate success. Some of the old Freethinkers did not expect to find her so talented. Her lecture on Hebrew and Babylonish worship is well reported in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* has the decency to insert a letter from Mr S. Standing in reply to Brother Wickerson's tirade against playing cricket on Sunday at Old Southgate. That suburban village has been much stirred up by the Secularists of late, and both the local papers report last Sunday's proceedings upon the Green.

THE Secularists of Southgate are indebted to Mr. Pearson of Osidge Park for his kindness in giving the use of his park for the Children's Party on Sunday. This party has been organised by Mr. Hillier.

MRS. THORNTON SMITH lectured at Cromwell House, Southgate, on Sunday evening. She appears to have given great satisfaction. One gentleman, we are informed, was "almost persuaded to be a Freethinker." We hope the "almost" will be translated into "quite."

INSTEAD of returning to his old residence in Queen's Gardens, Lancaster Gate, Mr. Herbert Spencer has taken a house in St. John's Wood, not far off from that of the junior Member for Northampton. It is hoped that he will soon be able to round off his literary labors by the completion of the long-expected autobiography.

THERE has been a good sale of the *Freethinker* at the open-air lectures at Grays, but last Sunday the sale was very small, in consequence of the dockers' strike. We have arranged to have a number of copies given away while the strike lasts.

THE *Cornhill Magazine* for September has an article on "A Trio of Fiends," in which speaking of the Devil of the times of Dante when Christianity was supreme, it says:—"To the people the Devil was an intensely bad man with certain superhuman powers, and various horrible external attributes, such as horns, hoofs, and a tail—remnants of the old Satyr mingled with the Biblical dragon. He and his subject fiends were continually endeavouring to circumvent God and destroy man. To the mediæval mind there was no doubt whatever that the Devil constantly appeared to man, and sometimes carried him off bodily to be tormented in actual fire and with material instruments of torture."

YET, continues the writer, dreaded as the Devil was, he could be overcome with comparative ease; a relic was sufficient to daunt him, the sight of the cross was agony to him. He was, naturally, most inimical to holy men, and intruded himself upon them with foolhardy pertinacity, for in his frequent conflicts with the saints he was always worsted, and sometimes punished in a most ludicrous manner, as when St. Dunstan belaboured him with hammer and tongs, or St. Bernard turned him into a coach wheel. Yet, with all this, the age was very much in earnest about him, as it was about most things. It was a very literal age, and where it believed, believed implicitly.

The Thirteenth Annual Congress of the American Secular Union will be held in Philadelphia on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Oct. 25-27. Philadelphia is a central and historic city, and should draw a good number to the Congress from all parts of the States.

THE *Ironclad Age* says of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* "Those who wish to learn something of the literature and history of the Freethought movement in Europe and America will find this work indispensable."

JUDGE DIXON of the Supreme Court of New Jersey has decided that a man's civil rights are of more importance than the old common law that no person who denied that God will punish perjury can be a witness. A county court had refused the testimony of a man on his own behalf in an action for debt on account of his statement that he believed the only punishment for perjury was an earthly one. He appealed, and his appeal has been sustained.

WHAT is called Elsmereism, or unmiraculous Christian Theism, is said to be spreading in America.

MR. WHEELER has received a letter from Mr. Ernest Havet, of the Institute of France, thanking him for sending him his notice of "The Modernness of the Prophets." The learned savant congratulates us upon our paper being in its ninth year.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE HOLY LAND.—At all the holy places—from Bethlehem, where Christ was born to the temples of Golgotha and of the Holy Sepulchre, where he was crucified and buried—there is disputing, abusive language, and even fighting on the smallest provocation; they hack at one another and use as weapons not only church candlesticks and the heavy wax tapers, but also swords and firearms. At the holy places of Christendom there generally stands, or sits, swinging his legs, a Turkish soldier with loaded gun and fixed bayonet, as peacemaker between the warring representatives of the Christian Church.—*Autobiographical Sketches of Vassili Verestchagin—Painter, Soldier, Traveller* vol. ii. p. 318.

ILLNESS OF TWO FREETHOUGHT EDITORS.

WE regret to read of the simultaneous illness of Mr. Horace Seaver, the veteran editor of the *Boston Investigator* and of Mr. Eugene Macdonald, the editor of the *New York Truthseeker*. Is the Lord anxious to destroy these papers? If so, it does not appear that he will succeed, for the papers themselves show no sign of falling-off in their contents. Mr. Horace Seaver having manfully conducted the brave old *Investigator* for over fifty years cannot be expected to do much more work in the cause he has so much at heart. But we earnestly trust it will be long 'ere we have to write his obituary. No men have worked harder than he and his colleague, Mr. Mendum, and both have the esteem of all American Freethinkers, and are now fairly entitled to rest from their labors, knowing that their works do follow them. Mr. Eugene Macdonald is still but a young man, but he has done much to make the *Truthseeker* a power in the States. He has, we regret to say, been suffering from an attack of typhoid fever. We trust he will soon be able to resume his editorial chair; for, although as we have said, the *Truthseeker* shows no sign of falling-off, it is certain that Mr. Macdonald's pen can ill be spared.

AS we go to press, we learn from a private source of the death of Mr. Horace Seaver, after a short but severe illness. His loss will be lamented by every Freethinker in America, where he was universally respected. Some account of his life and services to the Freethought cause will be given in our next issue.

THE ENEMY AT SOUTHGATE.

THINGS are still very lively at Old Southgate. At the last outdoor lecture on "Christ Church and its priests" Mr. Standing was opposed by the Champion Snip of the Village, a by no means disinterested upholder of the Church, in a most elegant manner. The gratuitous insult offered to Mr. Hillier, of Cromwell House, as to his Secular Hall being merely a "Cock and Hen loft," and that "Foot and mouth disease might be caught there" ought to be noted. Surely the Vicar himself (who is a kindly gentleman) must disapprove of such language. We hope ere long to have a chance of catching the "*Foot*" disease if that gentleman will favor us with a visit—the *mouth* disease we leave to the Champion Snip.

Our leading Vendor of "great sacrifices" and "immense bargains" in the calico business inserts a letter in the *Christian Commonwealth*, praising his Pastor, the Pill Vendor—giving his valuable opinion upon Science, and also expressing his holy horror of Sunday cricket—whilst the other Pill Vendor is still to the fore—in other words he will *B* in. May I suggest to "great sacrifices" and "immense bargains," a competition amongst his customers (prizes to follow)—for those repeating the following without mistake:—Peter Piper Pecker picked a peck of Secular Pepper; now if Peter Piper Pecker picked a peck of Secular Pepper, where is the peck of Secular Pepper Peter Piper picked?

CHIEL.

AN HONEST PRIEST.

THE tribunal of Ragusa will, says the Vienna Correspondent of a contemporary, shortly investigate a singular charge against a priest. The incidents in connection with the case are truly romantic. Twenty years ago a peasant of the neighbourhood of Ragusa, being no longer able to support his wife, emigrated to the United States, leaving his better-half in charge of the village priest. From the first luck smiled on him, and he was able to send the priest fifty florins a month for his wife. Soon afterwards he largely increased the amount, but the priest only handed the woman five florins monthly, intimating that that was the sum sent by her husband. This went on for fifteen years, when this worthy clerical gentleman forged a certificate of the husband's death, and placed it in the hands of his wife, whose death is likewise certified in a forged document, and sent it to the husband in America. The priest then decamped to Corfu, and the woman got her living by begging. In the meantime the husband, fully believing his wife dead, as the certificate recorded, married

a rich American lady. After twenty years' absence he resolved to make a tour in Europe with his family. He visited Paris, Vienna, Trieste, and, finally, Ragusa. On landing at that harbour a beggar-woman accosted him and asked for alms. They recognised each other simultaneously. The beggar-woman was his wife, whom he believed to have been dead several years. The priest has been arrested.

VERY HIGH.

WHILE in England recently a Mr. Bigelow relates that he went to St. Ann's-on-the-Brentford-Under-the-Weir, a small place, strange to say, where some of his relatives live. They took him to service on Sunday. The parson is high church, as becomes the son of an earl. The noble clergyman was bemoaning from the pulpit the lukewarmness of his congregation: "It is very discouraging to me," he said. "During the pawst week the attendance at mass was distwessingly meagah, and it was even worse at vespers. Lawst Wednesday, howevah, the climax was weached. There were only five persons at glorification. It is vewy discouraging and painful to me. But then, my deah bwethwen, how much more discouraging and painful it must have been to our heavenly fawther."—*Butte Miner*.

TO ENOCH.
(Gen. v., 21—24.)

O Enoch, moving pre-diluvially,
A holy one thou wert as walked the valley—
'Tis thusly in the Holy Queer recorded—
And, being so, wert signally rewarded!
No details of thy doings highly holy
Are given, Enoch, to the meek and lowly;
Bleak statement that, Methuselah begetting,
You "walked with God three hundred years," ne'er
fretting,
Tho' walk exceeded far, in time and teasing,
Our "six-day-go's-you-pleases," nothing pleasing.
Great Scott! but what a walk was that—a corker—
Ah, verily, old man, thy name was Walker!
But all at once, the book says, you "were not,"
God scooping you as we a fat jackpot!

SI SLOKUM.

RELIGIOUS MANIA.

"Now the hypothesis of the gradual evolution of function applied to the nervous system explains many a case of insanity. If the tendency be to evolve or develop along such lines as are most used, it is obviously of immense importance that as many lines as possible should be opened up and developed, otherwise those in use will be over frequented, and the roadway will either fall out of repair, or become so macadamised that the journey of thought is made with no conscious perception of its purpose. By passages of this kind memory is not stirred, mental association and activity are not awakened, the function is automatic; a machine could produce an equally good result, and single live brains supply a fair proportion of insanity. Here is a common type:—

"Picture to yourselves a lady (of the pre-high-school period) of the ordinary run as regards accomplishments, and with just enough permanent income to enable her to live without the necessity of gaining a livelihood. She is one of a family of, and she herself has, a strong religious bias. She never marries, and all her life, up to 53 or 54 years of age, her chief sources of mental exercise, save what little is obtained from a by no means active intercourse with friends, are derived from the study of her Bible and volumes devoted to personal religion. Thus the history of such a life—and the type is, alas! pitifully common—is one of few stirring duties, of no sustained effort, of nothing that can be called in our present use of the word "education." A brain of this kind is worked almost entirely on one or two lines, and good as these in themselves may be, it has wanted variety, just as the stomach wants and will have, if its work is to be done properly, a variety of food. In its absence you can predict the result. The poor patient passes her later years in an asylum, a sufferer from religious mania, the natural outcome of this macadamisation of one or two roadways of thought, and the consequent grass-grown obliteration of all the rest."—From a lecture by Dr. Goodbart, *The Lancet*, July 6, 1889.

FORTHCOMING RELIGIOUS WORKS.

Among new theological publications we expect to see—

"My Spare Rib; or, How I Fell." By Adam Gardener.

"Jehovah's Dander." By the author of "The Lord's Passion."

"A Defence of Marriage with a Sister under Aggravating Circumstances." By Mrs. Kain.

"Details of the Cost of Construction of the Tower of Babel," discovered in Babylon, written on the skin of one of the unicorns spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah. Published by the Christian Evidence Manufacturing Society.

"Treatise on the Art of Finding Things that Do Not Exist." Translated from the Hebrew by M. Aresnest. Same publishers.

"Explanation of the Conformity of the Wall-papers found in Babylon with the Tenth Chapter of Ezekiel." Ibid.

"The Mysteries of Lion Taming." By Dan Yell.

"Our Experiences as Fire Kings." By Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

"Travels in the Interior of W(h)ales. By Jo. Nah.

"The Art of Walking on Water, with Lessons in Levitation." By J. C.

"Hints to Hotel-keepers: How to Feed Multitudes, and the Whole Art of Turning Water into Wine." By the same author.

"An Afternoon in the Third Heaven." By Saulus Paul.

"How to Mesmerise Aprons and Handkerchiefs." By Simon Peter Cephas.

A FEMALE PHILANTHROPIST.

She went round to seek subscriptions
For the Pagan brown Egyptians
And heathen, black of all descriptions,
So she did.

For the tribes round Athabasca,
And the men of Madagascar,
And the poor souls of Alaska.
So she did.

She longed, she said, to buy
Jelly cake and jam and pie
For the Anthropophagi.

So she did.
Her heart ached for the Australians
And the Borribobooli-Ghaliens,
And the poor, dear Amahaggians
Yes it did.

And she loved the poor Numidian,
And the Ebon Abyssinian,
And the charcoal colored Guinean,
Oh, she did!

And she said she'd cross the seas
With a ship of bread and cheese
For those starving Chimpanzees,
Sure, she did.

She sent pie and canned tomato
To the tribes beyond the equator
But her husband eat potato,
So he did.

The poor helpless, homeless thing
(My voice falters as I sing)
Tied his clothes up with a string,
Yes he did.

WHAT TO DO WITH DECAYED MEAT.

Mr. William Webster believes all the Bible is God's word. This will include Deuteronomy xiv. 21: "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien; for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God." Mr. Webster would rather "weep and gnash in hell" than have me punished by law if I sell decayed meat; for God says I may. I admire such devotion, but rather than be placed in Mr. Webster's position I will try and rub along without it.

I am one of the apostates necessary to fulfil Paul's prophecy. If I should write a book full of impossible stories I would prophesy that large numbers would refuse to believe them. It would make me "solid" with those who did believe.

РИСКУ (in *Twentieth Century*).

THE NEO-CHRISTIAN'S QUIBBLE.

IT will not do for geologists and astronomers who wish to retain some rags of orthodoxy, however soiled and torn, to argue, as most do, "that the Bible was not intended as a revelation of physical science, but only of moral and religious truth." This does not meet the difficulty; for the Bible does not merely use the common language and assume the common errors, on these points—it gives a distinct account of the creation, in the same style, in the same narrative, in the same book, in which it narrates the fall of man, the deluge, the revelation to Abraham, the history of Jacob and Joseph. The writer evidently had no conception that when he related the creation of the earth, the sea, and the sun, he was inventing or perpetrating a monstrous error; and that when he related the fall he was revealing a mighty and mysterious truth; and when he narrated the promise of Abraham, he was recording a wondrous prophecy. The Bible professes to give information on all these points alike: and we have precisely the same scriptural grounds for believing that God first made the earth, and then the sun for the especial benefit of the earth; that the globe was submerged by rain which lasted forty days, and that everything was destroyed except the animals which Noah packed into the ark, as we have for believing that Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise for a transgression; that God promised Abraham to redeem the world through his progeny, and that Jacob and Moses were the subjects of the divine communications recorded as being made to them. All the statements are made in the same affirmative style and on the same authority. The Bible equally professes to teach us fact on all these matters. There is no escape by any quibble from the grasp of this conclusion.—*W. R. Greg.*

THE MODERN EVANGELIST.

"Yes," said the evangelist after biting a large chew from a plug of black tobacco and expectorating with marvelous accuracy in the eye of a slumbering dog. "I've been a-getting there with both feet lately. The last town I stopped at I raked in twenty converts in one night, and you bet that's big work. I get right down to 'em and let 'em know that if they don't waltz up to the mourner's bench and get religion they'll be everlastingly in the soup; and I generally fetch 'em. Of course ther's always a lot of chumps you can't do anything with, but they don't count. I used to be a heavy-weight slugger, and I have had a book printed describing the scrapes I've been into. When the service is over I sell books to the chaps that's been saved and make a little stuff that way, but there ain't no money in this preachin' business. A feller's got to do it out of pure love for his fellow-men, just like I do it. I want to save as many as I can and give the Devil the grand razzle-dazzle, and all the reward I ask is to have a front seat in heaven when I turn up my toes. Well, I'll have to leave you. I'm going around to see a backslider what was converted a week ago, and when I read the riot act to him you bet I'll snake him back into the fold. So long." The noble and self-sacrificing man then moved off on his grand mission humming a simple hymn, the burden of which was to the effect that while the bed-bug has no wings at all he gets there just the same. Truly the world can never be plunged into utter darkness while such good men throw themselves earnestly into the work of salvation.

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THE SORCERESS.

My name it is Helena B.
I'm a dealer in Theosophy,
In re-incarnation
And Devachanation,
And Karma and Atma, you see.

A psychical conjuror I,
In my astral form I can fly;
An adept clairvoyant,
My spirits are bouyant,
With Mahatmas I rush through the sky.

Should anyone dare to insult
The mysteries we term occult—
Esoteric, Hermetic,
Kabbalistic, Prophetic,
Or aught that pertains to our cult—

With my magical powers and spells,
I'll glamor his nerves and brain-cells;
I'll make him hypnotic
And take a narcotic,
Then chase him through fifty-four hells.

His Linga-Sharira I'll bust,
His Buddhi knock into pie-crust;
I'll take off his Pranas
And blast all his Manas,
And his Rupa reduce into dust. F. T. S.

PROFANE ANECDOTES.

It was Fontenelle who, when a priest said God made man in his own image, said, "Man has returned him the compliment."

A waiter fell asleep in a Catholic church during High Mass. When the bell was rung he awoke and called out, "Coming, sir! Coming!"

A tramp entered a barracks of the Salvation Army to get a rest. The collection box was soon handed him, and he was asked to put in at least a penny. "If I had one," he replied, "I should not be sitting here."

Alexis Piron, the French poet, was picked up drunk on Good Friday. Asked what he could say in defence of such wickedness, he replied, "What could be expected of a poor frail man on a day when even deity succumbed?"

Sir Francis Chantrey, the great sculptor, was a well-known Freethinker. Dining once with the Duke of Wellington, that great soldier asked him if he was an *Arminian* or *Presbyterian*. Chantrey replied, characteristically, "Well, the fact is, your grace, I m a *Derbyshire* man."

The Polish Princesse de Talmont was in love with Charles Edward the Pretender, and wore his portrait on her bracelet. To please the Queen, however, she always affected piety, and on her other bracelet had a portrait of Jesus. It being remarked as strange that she would worship two persons so different, the Countess de Rochefort (afterward Duchess de Nivernois) replied, "They have one thing in common. Charles Edward too can say, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'"

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